

BRIEUX AS A BIG BROTHER TO BLIND  
SOLDIERS

B  
HV1961

HA 1641  
PA 1641



**M.C. MIGEL LIBRARY  
AMERICAN PRINTING  
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**



Nov. 1916

C.1

tant and urgent problems, but also is harmful to the good relations between the two nations. The Russian Government therefore requests the Mongolian Government to dismiss the ecclesiastic persons holding high positions, and replace them with men of secular character. In delivering this to you in the name of the Russian Imperial Government, I beg the Mongolian Government to communicate this to the head of autonomous Mongolia, Bogdo Jebtsun Dampa Hutuktu-Khan, and let me know of the decision.

The newspaper states that the Mongolian Government will reply that the Russian note raises a question over which Russia has no jurisdiction, as it is Mongolia's own internal affair. The Russian Government, however, will undoubtedly gain her point. Soon after the above note was sent, China received from Russia a note protesting against Mongolia's sending representatives to the Chinese Parliament. The correspondent of the *Russkoye Slovo*, of Moscow, writes to his paper:

In Chinese political circles the note of the Russian Government on the question of Mongolia's representation in the Chinese Parliament is being discussed with much interest. Chinese politicians, in spite of the Russian view, are endeavoring to prove that the participation of Outer Mongolia in the Chinese Parliament is not contradictory to the Chinese-Russian agreement of 1913 in regard to Mongolia's autonomy. Especially so, as Russia recognized Mongolia as a territorial part of China. From authoritative statements it appears

that the Chinese point of view will stand no criticism, and is condemned to fail. By the treaty of 1913, Russia recognized China's suzerainty over Mongolia. She will interpret this clause, in all probability, so as not to allow China to control Outer Mongolia through legislation.

The interesting point about this latest note is that Russia is taking the side of Mongolia in a situation which, so far, did not provoke any protest from the Mongolian Government.

Japan's interest in southeastern Mongolia goes back several years. Japan first procured railroad concessions in Mongolia. Then, in March, 1915, Japan demanded of China exclusive mining rights in eastern Mongolia, the right for Japanese to settle, and a series of other demands. China had to give in. In August, 1916, there were enough Japanese settlers in eastern Mongolia to dare to disobey Chinese orders. The Chenchitaung riot that followed was cause enough for Japan to send her troops to Mongolia and present a new list of demands to China. On October 10, Japan demanded that "Japanese be allowed to police Manchuria and Mongolia wherever they deem necessary." The correspondent cabling of this latest Japanese move writes that "the tone of the Japanese representations is peremptory, and shows a disposition to force the situation."

HV1961 AMERICAN Review of Reviews NOV 1916

## B BRIEUX AS A BIG BROTHER TO BLIND SOLDIERS

cop.1

THE eminent French playwright and propagandist, Eugene Brioux, has conceived the happy idea of constituting himself a special godfather to all the blind poilus. To this end he has addressed to them a series of four letters. These missives, which are quite free from sentimental banalities, are written in a style whose charm springs from its simplicity and sincerity. They contain information, advice, and encouragement for the men who are trying to adjust themselves to a new life wherein their eyes are in their finger-tips.

The dramatist offers to answer any question pertinent to the needs of any blind soldier who will write to him, or to put him in communication with some one of his fellows who has encountered a like misfortune, and has learned to take up his life anew with serenity and happiness as well as courage.

The letters are primarily intended for

agricultural laborers and mechanics, though a few lines are addressed to those in clerical positions. They are copied in Braille so that every man who has learned this system can read them for himself. While not intended for publication, they form such a notable piece of social service that the editors of *Les Annales* (Paris) requested the privilege of printing them; they accordingly appear in that weekly, beginning with the issue of July 31.

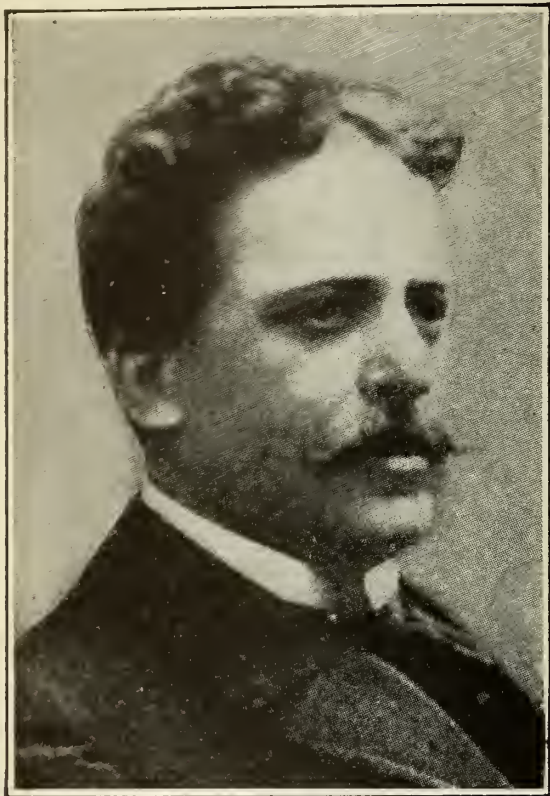
### FIRST LETTER

You have been wounded in the eyes, my comrade, and are in the hospital, with a bandage around your head. You are sad, and I understand that; you are disquieted about your future, and that is quite natural. You are asking yourself whether you will be able to see well enough in the future to take up your old trade, even whether you'll be able to walk without guidance. I can't say as to that, since I have not seen your wound.

When this is read to you you will have recov-



ered from your immediate suffering and will be ready to think of your future. I wish to aid you. Since the month of April, 1915, I have lived with soldiers afflicted as you are; I have followed many, step by step, from their arrival at the hospital till their arrival at home after a stay at the school of re-education. I will not undertake to console you. When I am ill I feel like beating the people who pity me. To pity a man is to



EUGENE BRIEUX, THE FRENCH PLAYWRIGHT  
AND CHAMPION OF THE BLIND SOLDIER

humiliate him. I wish to help you and to make you profit by that which I have learned from living with those who are in your fix. I will not tell you you are a hero. We know that, and you know it. I will say to you that you are a man and that you must act, not as if you were in despair, but bravely, like a man who will not let himself be beaten down; who will not waste his time in weeping over a misfortune which no one can remedy, and who is going to go through his life with his face turned not towards the past, but towards the future.

What will it be, this future of yours? As far as concerns your wound we do not know. Let us hope that things go well. But it may take a long time—a very long time. It is even possible that to make sure of a cure you may have to wear a bandage for many months. This time must be utilized in learning to live and to work as do those who have never been able to see, and who are all quite cheerful. It repeat it: who are all quite cheerful!

What do you risk by this? Nothing. Or rather, nothing but good. In case you get better you'll soon forget what you have learned, and at any rate you'll have kept from being bored. In the contrary event, you will have gained time in the adapting of yourself to your new life. When one knows beforehand that in playing a game one is bound to win, there's no need to hesitate; play your hand. . . .

\* \* \*

What is it you must do? You must begin to work. You must learn one of the trades in which

only fingers, and not eyes, are needed. There are such trades, and quite a lot of them, and ones in which you can earn money. That was well known even before the war, and in every country there were self-supporting blind people. . . . Since the war, many who have lost their eyes have already become established. There are farmers, brushmakers, chair-menders, carpet-makers. One man who was a joiner has taken up his old trade. Then there are package-wrappers, mechanics, poultry-raisers, cobblers, and even a hairdresser.

Naturally you don't believe me. In your place I wouldn't either. Only I can prove I'm telling you the truth. You have only to write to me. I will give you the number of the regiment, the battalion, and the company of a man working at the trade you happen to be interested in. I will tell you where he is now; then you can write to him directly, or even go and have a talk with him. . . . Do what I tell you: demand proofs. I shall not be annoyed; on the contrary, I'll be delighted.

You won't believe me any better if I tell you they are happy; I'd rather have them tell you so themselves. Now, since blind men were cheerful before the war, and the soldiers blinded in the war who have begun to work again are happy, why shouldn't it be the same with you? . . . Are you built different from them? Are you stupider? More awkward? Less courageous? No? Then there's no reason why you shouldn't succeed where they have.

You must know, too, that you will not be abandoned. The Government gives you a pension. And that is no more than it ought to. To this pension of 975 francs for a private will be added 100 francs for the military medal, and very probably 225 francs more by way of "augmentation of pension." That will give you 1,300 francs, or 3 francs, 55 centimes per day (about 70 cents). Not a fortune, to be sure, but in the country it would certainly keep one from starving.



© International News Service.

TEACHING A BLIND SOLDIER THE CARPENTRY TRADE



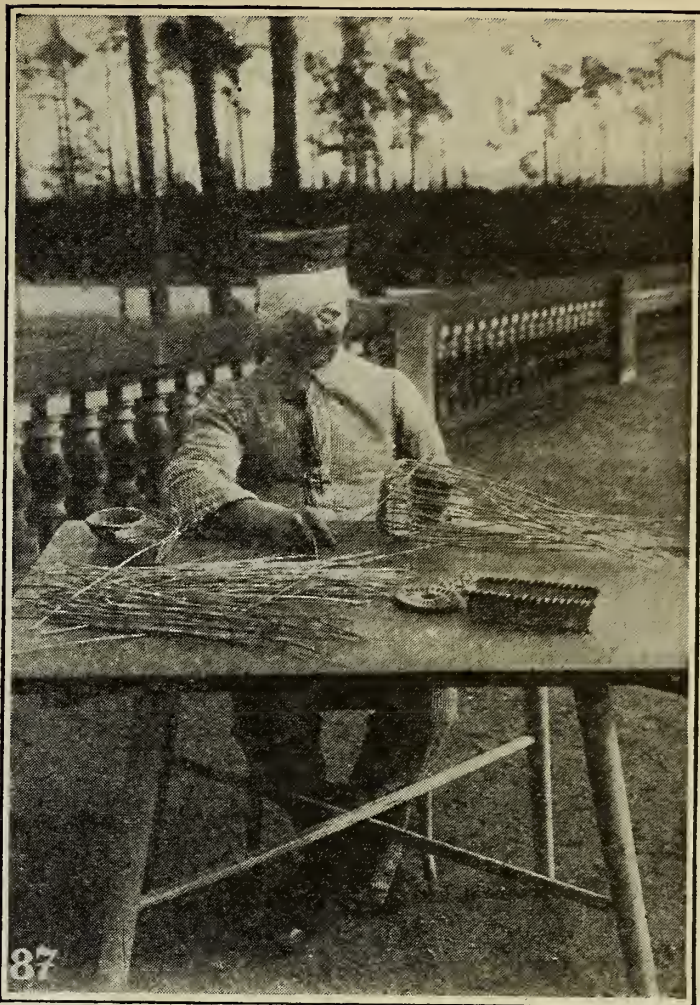
If you have need of help, or if you fall sick, or if you marry, or if you have children, there are societies which will come to your assistance. Their names and addresses will be given you. But it is to be hoped that you will have no such need, but that you can take care of yourself by the product of your own labor plus your pension. Therefore you must begin to learn a trade as soon as possible. . . . I have said this already to many of your comrades, and some replied: "If I learn a trade they'll reduce my pension." That is not true, and I will give you proof. Others have said to me: "I have enough to live on with my pension; I do not need to bother my head with learning a trade." I proved to them that they were wrong and I will tell you how. Others yet have said: "I'll never get anywhere with my 'windows broken.'" Now they know that they were mistaken. I will tell you about that in my second letter.

*Voici* my name and my address:

BRIEUX,  
de l'Académie française,  
Paris.

In his second letter M. Brieux further urges the learning of a handicraft and gives the addresses of schools. In the third he discusses the choice of a craft and strongly advises the learning of Braille, not merely for the pastime or instruction to be got, but so the blind man can carry on his own correspondence and keep his own accounts.

The final letter is devoted to domestic problems, such as the return home, the choice of a wife, etc. He very wisely recommends the returning son not to allow his family to bewail his fate nor treat him like an invalid. As to marriage he has two words of caution—to look not for the mercenary females who are tempted by the glitter of the pension, and not to be tempted into espousing a damsel of higher social degree who may offer her hand through an impulse of pity



Photograph by Paul Thompson

A BLIND GERMAN SOLDIER LEARNING BASKET  
WEAVING

and romance. Here speaks the dramatist from his wisdom concerning the effervescence of human emotions:

Resist such as these with all your strength. At the time such a person is doubtless sincere, but in a year, or five years, or six, she will no longer consider you a hero; her sentimental crisis will be past, and you will both be very unhappy, feeling the gulf between you.

## COÖPERATIVE HOUSING OF MUNITION WORKERS

MANY large engineering and other factories have recently been erected in the rural districts of Great Britain to insure healthier environment and reduce the cost of living. A recent issue of *Engineering* (London) shows how some of the problems connected with this sudden expansion have been solved, and the results are interesting, not only as bearing on a difficult social question of the day, but as showing how an industrial community can be established with the workers living in isolated dwellings, yet with coöperative means of supplying food and other domestic services.

In one of the districts where large factories of Messrs. Vickers, the English ordnance manufacturers, were located, it became necessary to provide accommodations for several thousand workers with their families. To have attempted the rapid erection of dwelling houses would have required the services of a number of builders and other laborers who were not available, and, furthermore, it would have locked up considerable capital in buildings which, in the future, possibly would not be needed in that particular district for such numbers of work-people. Accordingly the plan of housing



adopted was to secure certain public buildings and to rent *all* available large private houses, even those in isolated locations and to convert them into flats or small dwelling apartments with one or two bedrooms and a sitting-room, or into separate cubicles. Other buildings were transformed into canteens or restaurants and large recreation rooms. One of the largest buildings became a hospital with 200 beds, a fully equipped operating-room, and all necessary accessories. This was found to be particularly advantageous, as so many of the civic hospitals had been taken over for wounded soldiers.

In no cases were the large buildings arranged as dormitories for the mechanics and other workers; as a general rule, each preferred at least a separate cubicle of his or her own, and some proper form of division had to be made of the single men, single women, young boys, young girls, and married couples with and without families. In this division due care had to be exerted to keep the different nationalities apart or under harmonious conditions. In some cases a married couple with a family would take charge of a dwelling house, keeping the first floor and looking after the lodgers on the second.

In other cases a dwelling house would be divided into flats, and various forms of arrangement were made. In some cases kitchens were provided in the general hostels, and meals were served to the lodgers either in their lodgings or at the works canteen when they were on duty. The vegetable gardens possessed by the larger houses were used in connection with the commissary department and, in addition, a large farm was secured whose development was systematically carried on. A central cooking and catering department was organized, which provided the furnishing of cooking and other necessary appliances for the separate houses, as well as for preparing food when it was not cooked on the premises. As the area covered by the various hostels was 120 square miles and food had to be served over this area, a fleet of motor vehicles was maintained so that the various dishes could be kept hot in transit while being distributed to the various houses.

Canteens were built at the works to feed the men and women actually at work with a minimum of delay, while the wives and families of the workers were supplied with food at their homes. In addition mineral waters and beer were furnished, as it was believed that by distributing beer the men would be inclined to remain at home rather

than to go out to licensed places. A comprehensive charge was arranged for each person, including all supplies, use of furniture, table linen, gas, cooking and food. The schedule of charges was as follows:

	PER WEEK			
	£	s.	d.	
Single men.....	0	18	6	(\$4.62½)
Married couples.....	1	10	0	(\$7.50 )
Children living with parents, boys or girls, up to eight years old.....	0	4	6	(\$1.12½)
Children living with parents, boys or girls, between eight and fourteen..	0	5	6	(\$1.37½)
Children living with parents, girls, between fourteen and eighteen.....	0	14	0	(\$3.50 )
Women over eighteen.....	0	14	0	(\$3.50 )
Boys between fourteen and eighteen .....	0	14	0	(\$3.50 )

In some cases where highly educated women were employed a special hostel was maintained where the charge was 18 shillings (\$4.50) per week.

The transportation of the various workers was also a problem, as there were no train or trolley services, so that twenty-eight large motor omnibuses, each capable of accommodating forty workers, were maintained to carry the workers to and from the factory at a rate of one-half pence (one cent) per mile. A special garage for these omnibuses was 120 feet wide by 75 feet deep, their maintenance presenting a problem in itself.

In addition to the material care of the working people, the social and religious oversight was not neglected, and a chaplain was appointed, who had had considerable experience with working people and was acquainted with their work. The chaplain's duties included, among other matters, the settlement of disputes among the families living in each hostel, attendance on the children, the organizing of concerts and recreation, and general assistance in promoting the welfare of the people. A theater and a concert hall with an organ were erected and suitable entertainments were organized, even on Sunday, to which the workers were brought in the motor omnibuses mentioned.

An experienced market gardener was charged with the oversight of the gardens connected with the two hundred hostels and the residents were encouraged to raise as many vegetables and fruits as possible, and also flowers, prizes being offered for the most artistic displays.

Experiments in coöperative housekeeping such as described, are beginning to be common in Great Britain.

are  
th

**Bro-Dart** INDUSTRIES

THURGOOD, L. & J., Los Angeles 25, Calif.  
Toronto 6, Ontario

Made in U.S.A.



